2, on Input Device 7. In response, the controller provides a second tactile sensation, Sensation 21 in Input Device 7. The first pressure can correspond to a first input signal, Input 7, and a first function, Function 1, and the second pressure can correspond to a second input signal, Input 8, and a second function, Function 2. The controller delivers the associated function input to the electronic device in response to each received pressure. Note that the controller may cause the actuator to include a different wave form, frequency, and/or magnitude as tactile feedback in relation to different pressures, modes, menus, and other functionality.

[0072] The controller can also determine if any an ambiguous input is received 71. The ambiguous input can represent a combination of input device, input signal, position data, and pressure data that is not represented the data contained in memory. Alternatively, an ambiguous input signal can represent input simultaneously from two input devices or an input from a portion of a touchpad that is not associated with an input device. In response to receiving an ambiguous input signal, the controller obtains the associated ambiguous tactile feedback information 72 and produces the associated distinct tactile sensation, Sensation 22, in one or more input devices associated with the ambiguous input. In one embodiment, when the controller detects both a first and second input, the controller determines if either one of the inputs is ambiguous. If not, then the controller produces the associated first and second tactile sensations. If either input signal is ambiguous, then the controller produces the ambiguous output tactile sensation 56 in the appropriate input device.

[0073] Since the function corresponding to the input signals, positions, and pressures detected by the controller may involve modification of the functions associated with a given combination, the controller can also update the database stored in memory 57. In one embodiment, the controller is monitoring Input Device 6, and detects a first pressure, Pressure 1, applied to that input device. The first pressure corresponds to one of a plurality of input signals, Input 4, corresponding to a first set of input functions, Functions 1-3. The controller obtains Function 1 and Sensation 17 information and produces the appropriate tactile sensation at Input Device 6. Function 1 can represent one set of menus from a list of menus or one operating mode out of a plurality of operating modes. Suitable operating modes include instant messaging, electronic mail, voice mail, games, and missed phone calls.

[0074] Since Function 1 represents a menu or mode that may have additional sub-menus or mode functions associated with it, the controller, in response to Function 1 updates the database as illustrated in **Figure 10**. As the controller continues to monitor Input Device 6, it detects a second pressure 3″ corresponding to one of the input signals, Input 6, which corresponds to one function in the second set of functions, Function 6. The controller also obtains the tactile sensation, Sensation 19″, associated with the selected second set function and provides this tactile sensation at Input Device 6. In addition, the controller provides an associated function signal to the electronic device. Suitable second set functions include sub-menus and functions corresponding to the selected first set function. In addition, the second set functions can include a function that returns the set of functions to the first set of functions. Although the pressures and tactile sensations associated with the first and second set of functions can be the same, preferably, the first pressures and tactile sensations, Pressures 1-3 and Sensations 17-19, are distinct from the second pressures and tactile sensations, Pressures 1″-3″ and Sensations 17″-19″.

[0075] In an embodiment of the apparatus of the present invention, for example, the apparatus is incorporated into a mobile phone and includes an assignable-function input device and assignable function rocker switch input device. In a main or home screen of the mobile telephone that is displayed upon powering up the mobile telephone, the assigned function for the assignable-function input device is ″PHONEBOOK″and the rocker switch has no current function assigned to it. Light searching pressure applied to the assignable input device and the rocker switch will produce first and second distinct tactile sensations to indicate which input device is being contacted. Selecting the rocker switch will not produce any function in the mobile phone since no function is currently assigned and a function failure tactile sensation, as described herein, will be output through the rocker switch. Selecting the assignable input device will place the mobile telephone in ″Phonebook″mode and a third distinct tactile sensation will be output through the assignable input device.

[0076] A list of phonebook entries is now displayed on the screen of the mobile telephone. The assignable input device is assigned the function ″SELECT″ and the rocker switch is assigned a scroll function. Light pressure on the assignable input device or the rocker switch produce a fourth and fifth distinct tactile sensations, indicating that the mobile phone and the input devices are in ″Phonebook″mode. Selecting the rocker switch to either scroll up and down produces bumps or clicks associated with scrolling a list of entries in the rocker switch. Special clicks can be output for passing each alphabetical tab in the phonebook or for passing frequently called entries. In one embodiment, an analog switch is included under the rocker switch to provide an analog signal roughly in proportion to the pressure registered on the rocker switch. This allows the list that is being scrolled to be scrolled at a rate that can be controllable with the amount of pressure applied, and which is communicated to the user by corresponding increase in the rate of haptic events played on the rocker switch. Once the rocker switch has been used to highlight the desired entry, the assignable input device is pushed to select that entry and a sixth distinct tactile sensation is output through the assignable input device.

[0077] The assignable input device continues to be assigned the function of select and the rocker switch is still used as a scrolling device. The display of the mobile telephone, however, display another menu list containing the functions ″EDIT″, ″VIEW″, ″CALL″, and ″DELETE″. Light pressure on assignable input device and rocker switch again produces the fourth and fifth tactile sensations, indicating that the ″Phonebook″ mode or function is still active. Using the rocker switch to scroll up or down through the list again produces a click in the rocker switch as each entry is passed. The magnitude of each click and the spacing between clicks can be varied to indicate that a relatively short list is being scrolled. In addition to a click, seventh, eighth , ninth and tenth distinct tactile sensations as output to the rocker switch as the switch scrolls past ″EDIT″, ″VIEW″, ″CALL″, and ″DELETE″respectively. Scrolling is stopped on the ″CALL″ entry, and the assignable input